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Economic Research Service

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

ERS is the main source of research and analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing timely information on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America.

New On the Web

2006-15 agricultural baseline projections

Steady domestic and international economic growth and gains in population strengthen demand for food and agricultural products in the baseline. Each year, USDA makes 10-year economic projections for the food and agriculture sector.

Find it at:

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/oce061/

Commodity Markets and Trade

ERS Outlook reports provide timely analysis of major commodity markets and trade, including special reports on hot topics. All reports, along with a calendar of future releases, are available at: www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook

Amber Waves February 2006

Amber Waves magazine covers the full range of ERS research and analysis, including articles on food, farming, natural resources, and rural America.

www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves



Agricultural Contracting: Trading Autonomy for Risk Reduction

Farm production is shifting from smaller to larger family farms and from spot (or cash) markets to contracts. Technological developments may underlie much of the shift to larger farms, but expanded use of production and marketing contracts supports that shift by reducing financial risks for farm operators.

Food Stamps and Obesity: Ironic Twist or Complex Puzzle?

The Food Stamp Program was designed to provide a nutritional safety net for low-income households while boosting demand for domestic agricultural products. As the major nutrition problems facing the U.S. population have shifted from too little intake to overconsumption and obesity, some have questioned whether food stamps encourage participants to eat too much.

EU and U.S. Organic Markets Face Strong Demand Under Different Policies

Organic markets in the European Union member states and the U.S. are nearly the same size in terms of retail sales. At the same time, their farm sectors differ significantly, with the EU-15 member states having more organic farmland and more organic operations than the U.S. This article compares EU-15 and U.S. policies regarding organic agriculture, and compares the farm sector and retail markets in the two regions.

The World Bids Farewell to the Multifiber Arrangement

January 1, 2005, marked the end of a 10-year phaseout of the Multifiber Arrangement (MFA) quotas under the aegis of the World Trade Organization. This article examines the origins and spread of quotas under the MFA and the impacts of their subsequent elimination.

Conservation-Compatible Practices and Programs

www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/err14/

Conservation-Compatible Practices and Programs: Who Participates? examines the business, operator, and household characteristics of farms that have adopted certain conservation-compatible practices, with and without financial assistance from government conservation programs. The analysis finds that attributes of the farm operator and household and characteristics of the farm business are associated with the likelihood that a farmer will adopt certain conservation-compatible practices and the degree to which the farmer participates in conservation programs.

Food Assistance Expenditures at a Record High

www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB6-2/

One in five Americans participates in at least one of USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs during the year, according to the *Food Assistance Landscape, March 2006*. In fiscal 2005, an estimated 55 percent of USDA's budget supported the programs that provide children and low-income people with access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education. The Economic Research Service (ERS) is responsible for conducting studies and evaluations of USDA's food assistance programs.

The
**Food Assistance
Landscape**
March 2006



China's Fruit and Vegetable Exports Compete with U.S. Products

www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/FTS/Feb06/FTS32001/

China has raised its profile in global fruit and vegetable markets, with the value of its exports during 2002-04 more than double the value from a decade earlier. *China's Rising Fruit and Vegetable Exports Challenge U.S. Industries* shows that most of China's exports are processed fruits and vegetables that do not yet pose a serious challenge to U.S. exports. However, China's fresh vegetable sales to Japan and other Asian markets compete directly with U.S. products. In addition, the United States has been the largest market for China's apple juice exports. Over time, China's growing domestic market may absorb more of its production. Moreover, China faces stiff challenges in improving the quality and safety of its products, upgrading its marketing and distribution infrastructure, and reducing marketing costs.

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getting a
makeover...



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- State fact sheets
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